

resources that could potentially be impacted by construction of the Project. These intensive surveys are undertaken once the initial centerline location is determined, and can lead to adjustments in the centerline to avoid potential impacts. More cultural sites have been identified in the West corridor because of its more varied topography and undeveloped nature. Western's Programmatic Agreement is under review with the California Office of Historic Preservation and other affected parties. The Agreement will address inventory strategies, consultation, eligibility and effect, and treatment plans, and will be referenced in the MAP.

Transmission structures located in either the East and West corridors would be visible from Interstate 5; however, they would be more visible in the East corridor. Structures in the West corridor would be more visible from recreation areas in the foothills and at reservoirs.

Transmission line construction in either corridor could affect roadways during construction by causing congested traffic or by damaging road surfaces.

Construction of the Project in either corridor would require similar commitments of conductor wire, structure steel, concrete, and energy resources. Locating the transmission line at least 2,000 feet away from PG&E's two 500-kV Intertie lines is preferred since it increases power system reliability by reducing the possibility of a single event loss of all three lines (fire, aircraft crash, earthquake, etc.). This separation of these important large transmission lines is consistent with standard utility industry practice and Western Systems Coordinating Council and North American Electric Reliability Council criteria and guidelines.

Public Comment Summary

Western issued newsletters in June and August 2001 and conducted two public workshops on the Project on August 27 and 28, 2001. The landowners attending the public workshops voiced concerns over land values, future land use restrictions, and agricultural impacts to operations and productivity. Written comments were received from several landowners and the CPUC during the public review period.

In their written comments, landowners expressed concerns about locating the transmission line on their property and their desire to reduce impacts to their land and farming operations. Other concerns included

potential impacts on the economic development of a proposed housing development near the Los Banos Substation, San Joaquin kit fox habitat and mitigation areas being evaluated within the Western corridor, established habitat areas, and electromagnetic fields. Western will work with landowners to address their concerns during the transmission line siting and land acquisition processes.

Comments from the CPUC centered on including additional information from its environmental analysis. The CPUC's major comments included impacts to air quality, endangered species, water quality, increases in agricultural and other land uses, visual resources, seismic activity, socioeconomic, cultural resources, and mitigation measures. Western will also work with the CPUC, PG&E, and other Federal, State, and local agencies to assure that potential impacts are minimized.

Comments received and Western's specific responses are available on Western's web site or by calling the toll free number.

Dated: December 7, 2001.

Michael S. HacsKaylo,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-31346 Filed 12-19-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Western Area Power Administration

Havre-Rainbow Transmission Line Rebuild Project

AGENCY: Western Area Power Administration, DOE.

ACTION: Notice of floodplain/wetlands involvement.

SUMMARY: The Western Area Power Administration (Western) intends to rebuild the Havre-Rainbow 161 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line in central Montana. This will initially require replacement of structures. Eventually, conductors will be replaced and overhead groundwires and fiber optic cable may be added. The line lies north and west of the Missouri River and crosses the Marias and Teton Rivers near Loma, Montana, and the Big Sandy Creek near Big Sandy, Montana.

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Floodplain/Wetland Review Requirements (10 CFR part 1022), Western will prepare a floodplain assessment and will perform the proposed actions in a manner so as to avoid or minimize potential harm to or

within the affected floodplain. The floodplain assessment will be included in the Environmental Assessment being prepared by Western, in accordance with the provisions of the DOE National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (10 CFR part 1021).

DATES: Comments on the proposed floodplain action are due to the address below no later than January 22, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Comments should be addressed to Mr. Theodore Anderson, Environmental Specialist, Upper Great Plains Customer Service Region, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 35800, Billings, Montana 59107-5800, e-mail tanderso@wapa.gov. For further information on DOE Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements, contact Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, NEPA Policy and Compliance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The existing Havre-Rainbow Transmission Line is approximately 103 miles long and approximately 60 years old. The action will entail the removal of the existing structures and reinstalling the new structures. At some time in the future Western may reconductor the line to 230-kV and install overhead groundwires and fiber optic cable. Most ground disturbances will take place where the structures are replaced, at the splice points, and at pulling sites of the possible future installation of conductor, overhead groundwire, and fiber optic cable. Access roads for the line exist and may need to be improved. There may also be a need for additional access trails or roads to individual structure locations. The work will take place over a 10-year period by an in-house workforce.

The line crosses the Marias and Teton Rivers, at their confluence with the Missouri River near Loma, Montana, and Big Sandy Creek near Big Sandy, Montana. The line will affect lands mostly in private ownership (grazing and cultivated lands), but will also cross Indian allotted lands on the Rocky Boys Indian Reservation. There may also be lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and lands belonging to the State of Montana along the route.

Issued: December 12, 2001.

Michael S. HacsKaylo,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-31352 Filed 12-19-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P